

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**WELCOME RECEPTION FOR THE
INAUGURAL SERVICE OF
AIR CANADA ROUGE**

AN ADDRESS

**THE HONOURABLE SHAMFA CUDJOE
MINISTER OF TOURISM
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Date: Tuesday December 10, 2016

Venue: North Terminal, Piarco International Airport

Time: 3.00pm

- Her Excellency Carla Hogan Rufelds, the High Commissioner of Canada to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- Mrs. Vidiah Ramkhelawan, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Tourism
- Mrs. Adrienne Ayers-Allen, Acting General Manager (Acting)
- Ms. Ethlyn John, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and all other Ministry's senior executives
- Mr. Warren Solomon, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC)
- Ms. Arveon Mills, Acting Marketing Manager of the TDC and the TDC Management Team
- Mr. Emmanuel Baah, Marketing Manager, Airport Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT)
- Mrs. Debra Boyce, Senior Trade Commissioner in the Canadian High Commission
- The Captain and Crew of this inaugural Air Canada Rouge flight
- Colleagues and Friends in the Tourism Industry
- Members of the Media
- Other Specially Invited Guests

It is indeed a pleasure to have all of you present this afternoon as we welcome Air Canada Rouge, Canada's newest leisure and affordable airline, to our beautiful shores once again.

The commencement of this service is incredibly exciting for Trinidad and Tobago as it marks the resumption of a 60 year route that Air Canada had ended in 2008.

In today's fiercely competitive global market place, consistent, reliable and competitive air access is the lifeblood of any modern economy. In this light, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has sought to attract additional airlift both to Trinidad and to Tobago. We recently welcomed Condor and Thomas Cook to Tobago in November 2016 and today we open our arms to welcome Air Canada Rouge to Port of Spain Trinidad.

Further, as a result of our recent participation in ITB Berlin and the World Travel Market in London, we are in discussions with several airlines - including Eurowings, Norwegian Airlines and Air Berlin – all in our efforts to secure additional airlift directly to Tobago.

And, we invite Air Canada to consider the same.

The Air Canada service to Port of Spain from the Toronto hub - *which begins today a sold out flight of 282 passengers* - adds to the existing fourteen (14) airlines that service Trinidad and Tobago. The Air Canada Rouge service will operate twice weekly (Tuesday and Thursday) and the flights are timed to offer convenient connections to/from Quebec and all across Eastern Canada.

With an average of 40,000 to 50,000 visitor arrivals from Canada each year, Canada is our second largest source market. This is, therefore, a very positive development in the sector and highlights a big step in the right direction.

The typical Canadian visitor stays for approximately two (2) weeks and spends approximately TT\$6,500 per trip, generating approximately TT\$0.34 billion (US\$ 0.05 billion) in foreign direct revenue. Over 50% of Canadian visitors come to Trinidad and Tobago to visit Friends and Relatives (the VFR market); followed by approximately 20% who come for leisure. We are committed to improving our market share and welcoming more and more Canadians each year.

To this end, the TDC will be launching an aggressive marketing campaign in Canada that will position destination Trinidad and Tobago “top of the mind” whilst targeting leisure customers in the metropolitan Toronto area. Included in our promotional mix will be taxi advertising.

We are also improving our online presence and destination awareness through our website, online travel agents and social media. As we intensify our digital marketing agenda, we are excited about our new tourism mobile application, scheduled to be launched early next year, just in time for the Carnival season.

This new initiative is beneficial to the traveling public everywhere, as travelers would have the option to use Canada as a hub to other destinations like Boston, Baltimore, and Washington. This gives the

traveler more options for connecting services and a wider range of destinations from which to choose.

This inaugural flight service is momentous for Caribbean and global tourism, and the opportunities that emerge from this venture are endless. Any stakeholder who is serious about his own advancement or the development of this sector would jump on board and seize this moment. The government of Trinidad and Tobago is happy to be a part of this partnership and we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship.

We wish you every success in your endeavours, as we work diligently to make our destination number one in the not too distant future.

December 18, 2016